



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

11 am – Sunday 19th April 2020

Service conducted by the minister, Rev Angus MacRae.

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This is a guide to our Sunday morning service on 19th April. The service is shared online on the Free North YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjxeX18IKP4grKdqWEt2dgw>

CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 84:1-2,12)

How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty!
My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
LORD Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

WELCOME AND PRAYER

Quote from Horatius Bonar:

*“Upon a life I did not live,
upon a death I did not die,
another’s life, another’s death,
I stake my whole eternity.”*

PSALM 16:7-11 (Sing Psalms version)

I’ll praise the LORD my God,
whose counsel guides my choice;
And even in the night, my heart
recalls instruction’s voice.

Before me constantly
I set the LORD alone.
Because he is at my right hand
I’ll not be overthrown.

Therefore my heart is glad;
my tongue with joy will sing.
My body too will rest secure
in hope unwavering.

For you will not allow
my soul in death to stay,
Nor will you leave your Holy One
to see the tomb’s decay.

You have made known to me
the path of life divine.
Bliss shall I know at your right hand;
joy from your face will shine.

Tune (SM): Golden Hill.

TALK TO CHILDREN: LIVING CONTAINERS FOR GOD'S GLORY

Colossians 2:9-10

*For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,
and in Christ you have been brought to fullness.
He is the head over every power and authority.*

John 1:16

Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.

READING: JOHN 1:14-18

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") 16 Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

HYMN: MY HEART IS FILLED WITH THANKFULNESS

My heart is filled with thankfulness
To Him who bore my pain;
Who plumbed the depths of my disgrace
And gave me life again;
Who crushed my curse of sinfulness
And clothed me in His light
And wrote His law of righteousness
With pow'r upon my heart.

My heart is filled with thankfulness
To Him who walks beside;
Who floods my weaknesses with strength
And causes fears to fly;

Whose ev'ry promise is enough
For ev'ry step I take,
Sustaining me with arms of love
And crowning me with grace.

My heart is filled with thankfulness
To him who reigns above,
Whose wisdom is my perfect peace,
Whose ev'ry thought is love.
For ev'ry day I have on earth
Is given by the King;
So I will give my life, my all,
To love and follow him.

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AN EASTER PRAYER (COLLECT)

Lord of all life and power,
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him:
grant that we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might,
now and in all eternity. Amen.

SERMON – JOHN 1:14-18: WHAT THE WORD MADE FLESH CONCEALS & REVEALS

In the Bible, salvation is always the story of how sinful people can come to live in peace and union with God their Creator. Jesus Christ came to bridge the chasm between God and humanity. But there is a deep puzzle at the heart of the story of salvation. How can God's dazzling glory shine through the appearing of God on the earth, humbled and concealed in our mere human flesh?

1). GOD'S GLORY IS CONCEALED IN OUR HUMAN FLESH.

We are all discovering the value of human contact in this time of Covid-19 social distancing. When we are apart from loved ones our *words* can convey meaning and make us present while we are still at a distance. But words alone are not as good as being there sharing physical closeness. But God did much more than to send us a Book or make a phone call! God stepped down into this world, and into our human *flesh*, to draw close to us. The miracle of the incarnation is key to the big storyline of the Bible, where God is concealed in the frail body of Jesus. Jesus came among us to glorify God by ending our human isolation from God. His life and death and resurrection require his life in the body. In the words of Athanasius and the Nicene Creed, Christ had to become the God-man "*for us and for our salvation.*" Did everyone recognise Jesus as God? No! His glory was largely concealed. When God lay in a manger, and a few visitors glimpsed His glory.

2). GOD'S GLORY IS REVEALED IN OUR HUMAN FLESH.

God in our flesh was a concealing but also a wonderful revealing of His glory. Paul writes in Colossians 2:9-10, *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.* Here in John 1:16 we read, *Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.* New Covenant Grace is piled up upon Old Covenant Grace, grace after grace comes to us from His fullness! The miracle of Jesus is that the whole of God's glory is on display in Jesus, a real but a perfect human being.

At the Exodus, God revealed his glory to Israel by being present in his own tent among their tents. The light of God shone by day and night in the Tabernacle. Now John 1:14 tells us that in Jesus, God is setting up His tent or is 'tabernacling' in our human flesh. Jesus exists to reveal, explain or exegete God and his glory to us (see verse 18). Do you want to know what is God really like? Then simply look to Jesus Christ for your answer! Jesus serves as the prototype for humanity living in harmony with God. His life shows what a life lived for the glory of God should be. Jesus in our flesh is all that humanity was meant to be like! But in his sinless glory Jesus exposes just how far short we come of God's holy standards. We need Christ as a Saviour to expose what is wrong in us, and then to put it right. Then and only then can we be truly alive as we glorify God in the flesh. Our future hope is to be redeemed in Christ and located forever with God and his people in a perfect renewed Creation. What response is God looking for from you today? Two things. AWE for Christ and RELATIONSHIP with God through Christ. Please end the social distancing of sin by trusting yourself to the Saviour.

PRAYER OF RESPONSE

HYMN: IN CHRIST ALONE

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For every sin on Him was laid,
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine -
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man;
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

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BENEDICTION

HERE TO HELP EACH OTHER

Many will have relatives, neighbours and friends who can assist during this time of lockdown. But the church is a family in Jesus Christ, and we are here to help and encourage each other. If you need help of any sort we would love to hear from you. Contact the minister (07 506 006 459; angusmacrae1967@gmail.com), any elder or deacon, or the church office (office@freenorthchurch.org) if we can help with any spiritual or practical need.

DIARY THIS WEEK

There is an informal evening fellowship on Zoom tonight at 7 pm. This will include a testimony shared by Stuart Macleod.

Praying around the Church. This week congregation are praying for our sister churches in Durinish, and Christ Church, Edinburgh. Next week we will pray for congregations in Shawbost, Brora and Oban.

On Wednesday 22nd we hold a Church Night Fellowship online via Zoom at 7:30 pm. The Meeting ID is: 253 249 2745. The regular password can be obtained from Martin MacLean (office@freenorthchurch.org). You can also request regular email updates from the Free North Church by contacting Martin.

Next Sunday our Sunday morning worship will be shared on our YouTube Channel. We will return to sing our SONG OF THE MONTH next weekend. You can listen to an official video version of "CHRIST OUR HOPE IN LIFE & DEATH" sung by Matt Papa at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oibli1rz7mw>

Giving to support the work of the church. You can donate through our website (see the PayPal logo at the foot of the page). To set up a standing order, post a cheque or to arrange for Gift Aid, please contact our congregational treasurer, Mrs Barbara Macphail, 31 Towerhill Avenue, Inverness, IV2 5FX.
Tel: 01463 794622. Email: bmacphail@mail.com.